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## REVIEWS

### BOOKS OR "PIECES"?

It required no wisdom to foresee that the vogue of slender masterpieces buttressed fore and aft with the fruits of erudition would prove transient. Several recent ventures in the wake of the pioneers, such as Edward Everett Hale, Jr., plainly indicate that the literary diet of the high-school Freshman and Sophomore is soon to be less meager and concentrated.

The volume in hand,<sup>1</sup> a compilation of prose and verse for high-school reading, by Mr. Halleck and Miss Barbour, will make a strong appeal to boys and girls, and at the same time will provide material suitable for training them to read. Over fifty authors are represented, including Shakespeare, Milton, John Masefield, William Butler Yeats, and O. Henry. Humor has not been neglected, witness Bunner's painfully funny story of "Zenobia's Infidelity," which is the first selection in the book. A child who cannot find something to his taste and who is not tempted to read farther in the authors represented may be regarded as quite immune.

The apparatus evidences actual knowledge of schools. Five or six lines suffice to tell who the writer is and three or four more to direct the student to accounts of his work. "Study Hints" prompt the teacher and lighten the burden of working out assignments. Suggestions for theme subjects tempt the class to try their hands at speaking and writing, and may profitably be used to enhance the enjoyment of the reading—not mainly, let us assume, to teach composition for everyday uses. Finally, each lesson is rounded out by means of "Suggestions for Additional Readings," which are judicious and do not go ballooning off into the realm of books in general on the hunt for anything, good or bad, difficult or easy, which happens to have some point of resemblance to the work in hand.

All in all Halleck and Barbour's *Readings* is a real textbook for schools and stands a chance of retaining the respect of its youthful owner after its classroom days are over. This will depend, of course, on whether the teacher in charge is a teacher of reading or only a teacher of chronology, cartography, mythology, philology, rhetoric, and second-hand criticism.

J. F. H.

<sup>1</sup> *Readings for School*. By Reuben Post Halleck and Elizabeth Graeme Barbour. New York and Chicago: American Book Co., 1915.